

Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W
----- 057062

P R 040727Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4669
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL UDORN
DEPCHMACTHAI UDORN
13TH AF CC CLARK AFB
CINCPAC
13TH ADVON CC UDORN

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BANGKOK ALSO FOR USAID/LAOS RESIDUAL STAFF

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AMER, PFOR,US, LA
SUBJ: RAL EMPLOYEES' DEMANDS

REF: VIENTIANE 4639

1. YESTERDAY EVENING PANYA SOUVANNA PHOUMA, DIRECTOR OF RAL AND PRIME MINISTER'S SON, CAME TO SEE ME ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF THE RAL EMPLOYEES DEMAND FOR SEVERANCE PAY COMPARABLE TO THAT GRANTED USAID EMPLOYEES. THESE WERE THE EMPLOYEES WHO WERE FINANCED BY DAO AND USAID CONTRACTS TO MAINTAIN GENERATORS AND SERVE AS FIREMEN AT WATTAY AIRPORT.

2. PANYA SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED SEVERANCE AT
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LONG LENGTH WITH EMPLOYEES WHO HAD BEEN AMENABLE TO HIS

GENEROUS SETTLEMENT OFFER UNTIL A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO WHEN STUDENT ACTIVISTS BECAME INVOLVED AND PERSUADED EMPLOYEES TO SEEK SAME COMPENSATION AS USAID EMPLOYEES. NOW, PANYA SAID, THERE WAS NO WAY OF REASONING WITH THEM. THEY WERE THREATENING TO TAKE OVER ALL RAL FACILITIES AT AIRPORT AND START GOING THROUGH BOOKS UNLESS THEY RECEIVED SATISFACTION TO THEIR DEMANDS.

3. I SAID WE HAD NO MONEY TO MEET THESE DEMANDS. DAO AND USAID CONTRACTS HAD BEEN FIXED PRICE AND THIS PROBLEM WAS ONE FOR RAL MANAGEMENT. I TOLD PANYA I HAD MET WITH MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SINGKAPO WHO SEEMED TO AGREE FULLY WITH OUR POSITION AND SUGGESTED HE GO SEE HIM. PANYA REMAINED DEJECTED THROUGHOUT. HE SAID IT WAS NO USE HIS SEEING SINGKAPO WHO HAD PLAN TO OUST HIM AND TAKE OVER RAL. AFTER THRASHING AROUND FOR A WHILE, PANYA SAID AFTER ALL SUM WAS NOT LARGE (30 MILLION KIP, ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO \$15,000 AT FREE MARKET RATE). PERHAPS HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RAISE THIS AMOUNT, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT HAVE IT JUST IN HAND. HE WOULD THEN HAVE TO DO MORE JUGGLING OF THE BOOKS (SIC). HOWEVER, HE WAS CONVINCED DEMONSTRATORS DID NOT WANT SIMPLY TO OBTAIN FUNDS FOR EMPLOYEES BUT WANTED TO GET PAYMENT FROM THE U.S. I HELD FIRM AND SAID SEVERANCE PAYMENTS TO TAPS, USAID, ETC. EMPLOYEES HAD BEEN PURE AND SIMPLE EXTORTIONS. HE THEN WONDERED WHETHER, IF HE COULD FIND MONEY, HE MIGHT TURN IT OVER TO THE EMBASSY WHICH COULD THEN OSTENSIBLY PAY RAL. I SAID I WOULD HAVE TO THINK IT OVER, BUT COULD HE DELAY A REPLY TO THE PROTESTERS? HE SAID HE COULD.

4. COMMENT: I DID NOT HAVE TO THINK LONG: PANY' SCHEME IS A NON-STARTER. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLAY FOR TIME. WE ARE WAITING FOR MFA'S ANSWER TO OUR NOTE ON COMPOUNDS (WHICH WE HAVE JUST HEARD WILL BE DELIVERED AT 4 P.M. THIS AFTERNOON) AND WE WANT TO AVOID RISK OF RAL BEING TAKEN OVER BY DEMONSTRATORS BEFOE WE KNOW WHETHER WE CAN HANG IN OR HAVE TO LEAVE. TAKEOVER OF RAL COULD RESULT IN DATT AIRCRAFT BEING UNABLE TO FLY INTO WATTAY; TO DO SO WOULD RISK ITS BEING TAKEN OVER ALSO. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHAPMAN

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NNN

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